

Lyle Neff

STARBOTTLE FOR THE PLAINTIFF

An opera in three scenes

Libretto by the composer
adapted from a story by Bret Harte

March 25, 1981

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SCENE TWO

THE WIDOW'S FARMHOUSE, EXTERIOR. IT IS SITUATED DIAGONALLY, STAGE LEFT. THE SECOND STORY HAS A WINDOW FACING THE AUDIENCE, BUT OUT OF VIEW OF THE REST OF THE STAGE. THERE IS A CLOTHES LINE WITH DRYING CLOTHES STAGE RIGHT.

(WIDOW COMES OUT OF THE FRONT DOOR OF THE HOUSE AND TAKES DOWN THE DRIED CLOTHES.)

SHE THEN SITS DOWN ON THE STEPS OF THE PORCH WITH HER AUTOHARP AND PLAYS WHILE SINGING.)

LENTO $\text{♩} = 69$

THE WIDOW'S SONG

HARMONICA
(OR OBOE)

p

HARM.

[10] (FROM HERE PIANO PLAY HARMONICA LINE IF UNPLAYABLE)

PIANO II

HARM.

P.N. II

WIDOW

HARPSICHORD

P.N. II

ITS BEEN TEN LONG AND LONE-LY YEARS SINCE MY DEAR HUS-BAND DIED. BACK

(LUTE STOP)

* ARROWS IN THIS SONG INDICATE DIRECTION OF ARPEGGIO.

25

44

W. THEN TO FALL IN LOVE A-GAIN I NEVER EVEN TRIED. FORTEN YEARS IN THIS

HPSCD.

PN. II

5 2

4 2

8va

3

P

crusc.

30

W. HOUSE I'VE LIVED AND HAD TO CAR-RY ON, BUT NOW I THINK THAT I HAVE

HPSCD.

PN. II

5 4

4 4

6 4

8va

3

P legato

L'ISTESSO TEMPO J=69

W. BEEN WITH-OUT A MAN TOO LONG.

HARM.

HPSCD.

PN. II

6 4

4 4

3 4

mp

ad l.b.

3 mp

4

L'ISTESSO TEMPO J=69

35

W. WHEN I SAW THE COLO-NEL

PN. II

mf

40

45

W. GIVES SPEECH IN COURT A DAY A-GO, I KNEW THAT AF-TER

PN.II

45

AD LIB.

W. ALL THIS TIME HE WAS TO BE MY BEAU. HIS GENTLE SOUTHERN COURTESY,

PN.II

50

W. HIS EV'RY POLISHED PHRASE, AND HIS LOVE

PN.I

55

W. *dim.* AS AT FIRST *p* $\text{♩} = 69$
FOR THE SOUTH RE-MIND ME OF OLD DAYS.

HARM.

PN.I

W. *p* IF EV-ER THERE COULD BE A MAN TO TAKE MY HUS-BAND'S PLACE, THE

HARM.

HPSCD

W. WON - - DER IF MY LIFE WITH HIM COULD BE? A TEMPO

HARM.

HPSCD. 6 (LUTE STOP OFF)

P.N. II

W. *f dim. e morendo* 75

PN.II *mf* *cresc.* *8va- AH!*

(WIDOW RETURNS TO THE CLOTHES AND FOLDS THEM OUT OF HEARING OF THE NEXT DIALOGUE.)

HARM. 80 *RIT.*

PN.II *dim.* *3- RITEN.* *mp RIT.*

A SECRET BOYFRIEND

ALLEGRETTO *J.=104* (HIRAM CREEPS IN STAGE LEFT, DRESSED IN A RIDICULOUS MIXTURE OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY RUFFLES AND SOUTHERN OVERALLS. HE APPROACHES THE SECOND)

HARMONICA *mf* 85

PN.II *mf*

STORY WINDOW. READING FROM A BOOK, HE QUOTES SHAKESPEARE IN A HEAVY SOUTHEAN DRAWL.)

HIRAM (SPOKEN) 90 *sf*

"BUT SAWFT-WHAT LITE THADD YONDER WINDER BREAKS? IT IZ THE EAST AND JOOLIEZ IZ THE SUN-"

(STILL DRESSING, PUTTING HER HEAD OUT OF THE UPPER WINDOW)

LAUHALEE *mf*

FLUTE *mf* *HIRAM!* *YOU BE*

HARPSICHORD *mf*

W. *f* *dim. e morendo* *75* *8va* *AH!*

PN.II *mf* *cresc.*

(WIDOW RETURNS TO THE CLOTHES AND FOLDS THEM OUT OF HEARING OF THE NEXT DIALOGUE.)

HARM. *80* *RIT.*

PN.II *dim.* *3* *RITEN.* *mp* *RIT.* *68*

A SECRET BOYFRIEND

ALLEGRETTO *J. = 104* (HIRAM CREEPS IN STAGE LEFT, DRESSED IN A RIDICULOUS MIXTURE OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY RUFFLES AND SOUTHERN OVERALLS. HE APPROACHES THE SECOND)

HARMONICA *mf* *85*

PN.II *mf* *8*

STORY WINDOW. READING FROM A BOOK, HE QUOTES SHAKESPEARE IN A HEAVY SOUTHEAN DRAWL.)

HIRAM (SPOKEN) *90* *sf*

"BUT SAWFT-WHAT LITE THARO YONDER WINDER BREAKS? IT IZ THE EAST AND JOOLIEZ IZ THE SUN-"

(STILL DRESSING, PUTTING HER HEAD OUT OF THE UPPER WINDOW)

LAUHALEE *mf* *95* *HIRAM!* *YOU BE*

FLUTE *mf*

HARPSICHORD *mf* *tr*

100

L.L. QUI-ET OR MAW WILL HEAR YOU! AND MY NAME'S NOT JOO-LI-ET!

HPSCD.

105

HIRAM. BUT I JIST LARNED SOME POETRY FIA YER EMAS, LAURA LEE. AND ANYWAY IT SAYS IN THIS HERE BOOK THAT I'ZE GOTTA GET DRESSED UP IN THESE SISSY-LOOKIN' CLOE'S, AND COME TO YER BALCONEY, WHATEVER THAT IZ, AND SAY THESE PRETTY THINGS, LIKE THIS:

PN. I "IT IZ MY LADY, OOOOOOOOOO IT IZ MY LUV. OOOOOOOOOOOO THAT SHE KNEW SHE WERE—"

110

L.L. BE QUIET! YOU HEAR? SHHHHH! NOW GO, BE-FORE MAW FINDS OUT A-BOUT

HPSCD.

115

L.L. YOU AND ME AND OUR PLAN! COLD-NEL

HPSCD.

120

L.L. STAR-BOT-TLE'S COMING AN-Y MINUTE! gva SO, SNEW! BEFORE I TAKE A SWITCH TO YE!

FL.

HPSCD.

[125]

(FRIGHTENED, EXITING STAGE LEFT)

PIPING: 12 SICH SWEEEEEET SORRER, THAT I SHALL SAY 'GOOD-NITE' TILL IT BE MORRER.

PN.II *f* *sf* *dim.*

LL. *P* MAW, I SEE THE

FL. *P*

HPSCD. *P*

PN.II *pp* *ppp*

[135]

COLONEL DOWN THE ROAD. WILL YOU TELL HIM I'LL BE DOWN AS SOON AS I GET

FL. *8va* *3*

HPSCD. *legato*

LL. DRESSED? WE'RE GO-IN' TO DIS-CUSS THE CASE SOME MORE.

FL. *b* *b*

HPSCD. (CHANGE TO PIANO) *3*

PN.II *5* *4* *mp* *8* *3*

L'ISTESSO TEMPO J=88

mf

(LAURA LEE GOES BACK INSIDE FROM THE WINDOW SILL)

W. 145

YES, DAR-TER.

PW. II

W. 150

THIS IS MY CHANCE TO IM-PRESS THE COLONEL WHILE WE'RE A - LONE.

PW. II

APPLE CIDER

PRESTO J=132

(WIDOW TIDIES HERSELF, COLONEL ENTERS STAGE RIGHT)

PIANO I 155

PIANO II

(OBVIOUSLY IN GOOD SPIRITS)

160

A PIACERE

COLONEL

GOOD DAY, WI-DOW CAL-HOUN

PW. I cresc. ff

PW. II cresc. ff

L'ISTESSO TEMPO J=88

mf

(LAURA LEE GOES BACK INSIDE FROM THE WINDOW SILL)

W. 145

YES, DAR-TER.

PW. II

W. 150

THIS IS MY CHANCE TO IM-PRESS THE COLONEL WHILE WE'RE A - LONE.

PW. II

APPLE CIDER

PRESTO J=132

(WIDOW TIDIES HERSELF, COLONEL ENTERS STAGE RIGHT)

PIANO I 155

PIANO II

(OBVIOUSLY IN GOOD SPIRITS)

160

A PIACERE

COLONEL

PW. I

PW. II

cresc. ff

cresc. ff

GOOD DAY, WI-DOW CAL-HOUN

A TEMPO

165 *mf* *dim.* *J=J*

C. IS YOUR LOVE - LY DAUGH - TER AT HOME?

PN.I *ff*

PN.II *ff*

P 170 *mp* SLOWER *J=28*

I'VE COME TO CALL - AHEM - ON BUS' - NESS.

PN.I *P* *legato* *mp*

mp 175

W. WHY YES, COLO - NEL, SHE WILL BE DOWN

PN.I *mp*

180

W. SOON. MEANWHILE, WOULD YOU LIKE SOMETHING TO DRINK?

PN.I *Cres.*

mf [185] *(WIDOW POURS CIDER FROM A JUG ON THE PORCH. RITEN.)*

C. YES, THANK YOU. SOME LI-QUID RE-FRESH-MENT WOULD BE DE-LIGHTFUL. *(3 3 3)*

PN.I *(mf pp mp RITEN.)*

(SHE HANDS HIM THE CIDER AND BOTH OF THEM SIT ON A BENCH CENTER-STAGE) *(mp)*

W. A TEMPO [190] HERE IS SOME CI- DER.

PN.I A TEMPO

[195] *(mf)* RUBATO *(3)* A TEMPO

W. SO COLD-NEL, YOU SAID YOU DON'T HAVE A 'WIFE?

C. *(mf)* NO, MADAM.

PN.I *(A TEMPO 7/8)* *(3/4 RUBATO)* *(b.p.)*

[200]

W. A MAN LIKE YOU OUGHT TO BE MARRIED.

C. I HAVE NEV-ER HAD TO THINK OF SUCH A NE-

PN.I

205 (THINKS IT OVER) L'ISTESSO TEMPO $\text{♩} = 88$

C. CES-SI-TY. BUT VE-RY RE-CENT-LY

PN.I

210

I HAVE BEEN — AH — E-NA-MOURED OF A CER-TAIN YOUNG FE-MALE.

PN.I

ALLEGRETTO $\text{♩} = 112$ 215

W. OH? IS THAT TRUE NOW? A YOUNGER BELLE, YOU

sf mf cresc.

A PIACERE 220 (COLONEL SEEMS PUZZLED. WIDOW)

SAY? HAVE YOU EV-ER THOUGHT A-BOUT THE AD-VAN-TA-GES OF MA-TU-RI-TY?

mp (CHANGE TO HARPSICHORD LUTE STOP)

TAKES THE CIDER IN HER HAND.) 225

ANDANTE $\text{♩} = 208$ mp

THIS CI- DER A SHORT TIME A-

HARPSICHORD 7 8 sempre staccato

W. GO WAS JUST PLAIN. AP - PLE JUICE. IT

HPSCD.

230

W. TAS - TED SWEET AND SU - GARY BUT HAD NO STRONG - ER USE.

HPSCD.

235

W. - IN TIME THE AP - PLE JUICE MA - TURED AND

HPSCD. (LUTE STOP OFF)

PN. II *mf* *> dim.* *p*

W. *cresc.* NOW TASTES DIFFERENT: *RITEN.* *simile* *340* LENTO $\text{♩} = 69$ *mf* THE AG - ING BRINGS A MEL - LOW - NESS, A

PN. II *cresc.* *RITEN.* *CON PED.* *mf*

RUBATO ALLEGRETTO $\text{♩} = 104$ RECIT.

W. MORE AP - PEALING SCENT.

C. *3* *3* *3* *3* I'M AF - RAID I DO NOT UN - DER - STAND YOUR

PN. II *mf* *3* *3* *3* *3*

(BEFORE SHE CAN FINISH, LAURA LEE APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY IN ALL HER INNOCENT SPLENDOR, NOW DRESSED IN FULL REGALIA, STILL WITH A PARASOL, COLONEL, STUNNED, INTERRUPTS THE WIDOW)

W. 245 *P* LET ME SEE... WHAT I MEANT WAS—

C. MEANING. *f* 3 PRESTO $\text{♩} = 132$ MISS CAL-HOUN!

PN.II

C. 250 *mf* PLEA-SURE TO SEE YOU A-GAIN!

PN.II

LAURA LEE (SO INNOCENTLY) 255 *P* SLOWER $\text{♩} = 100$ THANK YOU, COLONEL STAR-BOT-TLE

HPSCD

PN.II SLOWER $\text{♩} = 100$

W. *mp* 260 3 WELL, I KNOW YOU TWO HAVE TO DIS-CUSS YOUR CASE. I SURE HOPE YOU CAN HELP LAU - RA

PN.II

265 (EXIT WIDOW INTO THE HOUSE WITH LAUNDRY. COLONEL BOWS
LEE.)

W.

PN. II

mf

270 AND HOLDS THE DOOR FOR HER)

PN. II

dim.

THE COLONEL AND LAURA LEE

275 RECIT. (TO LAURA LEE)
MODERATO ♩ = 112 *mf*

COLONEL

PIANO II

I HAVE HAD— AH— AN IN-TER-VIEW WITH MIS-TER HOTCHKISS, BUT I RE—

280

C.

FLUTE

HARPSICORD

PN. II

GREET TO SAY THERE SEEMS TO BE NO PROSPECT OF— AH— COMPROMISE.

265

(EXIT WIDOW INTO THE HOUSE WITH LAUNDRY. COLONEL BOWS

W. LEE.

PN. II *p. mf*

270

AND HOLDS THE DOOR FOR HER)

PN. II *dim.*

THE COLONEL AND LAURA LEE

275

RECIT. (TO LAURA LEE)

MODERATO $\text{♩} = 112$ *mf*

COLONEL

PIANO II *mf sf*

I HAVE HAD— AH— AN IN-TER-VIEW WITH MIS-TER HATCH-KISS, BUT I RE-

280

C. GRET TO SAY THERE SEEMS TO BE NO PROSPECT OF— AH— COMPROMISE.

FLUTE *p*

HARPSICORD

PN. II

57

285

290

295

(LAURA LEE KISSES THE COLONEL'S HAND)

AD LIB.
mp

300

A TEMPO $J = 104$

mf

L.I. 305

YOU TALK FOR ME LIKE YOU DID FER HIS OLD PITCH COMPAN-Y, AND YOU'LL FETCH IT, EV'-RY TIME!

PN.II

L.I. 310 *cresc.*

WHY, WHEN YOU MADE TINT JU-RY SIT UP YES-TER-DAY, I COULD 'A' JIST RUN O-V-ER AND

PN.II *mf*

L.I. 315

f A PIACERE
KISSED YOU RIGHT THERE, BE-FORE THE WHOLE COURT!

PN.II *ff*

(LAURA LEE AND COLONEL LAUGH. LAURA LEE GIVES HIRAM A THREATENING LOOK AND FIST, SO HIRAM FINALLY HIDES, FOR NOW)

C. 320

mf I MUST ASK YOU-AHEM- TO DI-RECT YOUR

PN.II *mf* *legato*

C. 325

ME-MO-RY TO AN-OTH-ER POINT. THE BREAKING-OFF OF THE EN-GAGE-MENT- DID HE GIVE AN-Y

PN.II

59

330

L.I. *mf* *>* NO HE JIST QUIT.

C. REA-SON FOR IT, OR SHOW AN-Y CAUSE? AND NA-TU-RAL-LY

PN.II *sf*

(LAURA LEE RAISES HER EYES AND SMILES IN REPLY)

C. 335 YOU WERE NOT CON-SIDUS OF AN-Y REA-SON FOR HIS DO-ING SO?

PN.II *dim.* *mp* 5/4 3/4

(SPEAKING:)

ANDANTE $\text{♩} = 58$

340

C. I SEE-NONE, OF COURSE? WE SHALL BEGIN PROCEEDINGS AT ONCE.

PN.II 3 *pp* 2

(LAURA LEE NODS. COLONEL IS IN RAPTURE)

C. I MUST, HOWEVER, CAUTION YOU TO SAY NOTHING ABOUT THIS CASE TO ANYONE UNTIL YOU ARE IN COURT.

PN.II *cresc.* 2/4

345 $\text{♩} = \text{♩} = 132$
PRESTO *f*

350

C. GOOD DAY, MISS CAL-HOUN. I HOPE TO CALL ON YOU A-

PN.II 2/4 4/4 6/8 *f*

C. *GAIN SOON—* *ANEM—* *A-BOU THIS BUS'-NESS.*

PN.II

A TEMPO $\text{♩} = 132$

PIANO I *ff*

PIANO II *ff*

360

gva

(CHANGE TO HARPSICHOORD)

(EXIT COLONEL STAGE RIGHT. HIRAM IN NICK OF TIME HIDES FROM COLONEL AS HE LEAVES. LAURA LEE

PN.II *ff*

365

tr

mf

GRABS HIRAM BY EAR AND PULLS HIM OUT OF THE BUSHES)

PN.II *ff*

370

cresc.

tr

L.L. (SPEAKING:) HIRAM (IN PAIN): L.L.

ALLEGRETTO $\text{♩} = 104$ (LAURA LEE TAKES HIRAM

FL. *YOU DARNED IDIOT!* *"SHE SPEAKS. OOOO SPEEAK* *OH SHUT UP. YOU COME*

YOU ALMOST RUINED EVERYTHIN'. *AGIN, BRIGHT ANGEL, FOR THOW* *WITH ME SO MANY*

ART AS GLORIOUS—" *DON'T SEE US.*

gva

f

tr

tr

PN.I

f

BEHIND THE HOUSE IN A SUGGESTIVE MANNER)

FL. *dim.* *RITEN.* 375

PN.II *dim.* *RITEN.*

A TEMPO

PPP CURTAIN

PPP